MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

25 FEBRUARY 1987

Lebanon

Syrian-Hizballah Clash — In the wake of a clash between Syrian troops and Hizballah gunmen, Beirut radio broadcast another warning by Brigadier General Ghazi Kan'an that gunmen must withdraw from West Beirut as "every gunman is an enemy of the city." A Syrian security source stated that 15 Hizballah members were killed in the clash in the Al-bastah area, AFP noted, but Hizballah indicated that its casualties were higher and accused the Syrians of opening fire in cold blood. Hizballah nevertheless urged its men not to react and to obey orders. The clash occurred after the Syrians took over the Hizballah headquarters in Al-bastah, Beirut radio disclosed, noting that the building was set on fire after being evacuated by Hizballah.

In other security developments, Beirut radio announced that Lebanese Army units will deploy on the Muslim-Christian combat lines and on the southern coastal road 25 February. Clashes continued between Amal and Palestinian gunmen in the Shatila area, according to the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon.

East Beirut Criticism — Lebanese Forces commander Samir Ja'ja'reaffirmed his side's opposition to Syria in remarks reported by Voice of Lebanon radio, stating that he is ready to ally with Druze, Sunnis, and "some" Shi'ites to confront the Syrian presence in Beirut.

Israeli Comment — Israel objects to any broader or deeper Syrian military involvement in Lebanon and reserves the right to exercise "full freedom of operation" if its direct defense interests are harmed, Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin stated in remarks broadcast by IDF radio. In a Knesset committee briefing, Rabin said the Syrian force in and around Beirut comprises up to 10,000 soldiers, though he noted that there has been no change in the Syrian SAM deployment in Lebanon.

Syrian Relations With Iran, Libya

Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Revolution Guards Corps Minister Mohsen Rafiqdust left Syria after meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad, IRNA reported, noting Velayati's statement that the talks were "positive and fruitful." He said that Lebanon and the Iran-Iraq war were among topics discussed. Meanwhile, Damascus radio reported the departure from Syria of Libyan Staff Major 'Abd al-Salam Jallud, who has been staying in Damascus for several months.

Israel

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres left for Cairo 25 February, telling journalists before his departure that his goal is to continue the peace process, not to bring about a government crisis, Jerusalem radio reported. However, Peres warned earlier in an IDF radio interview that there will be no reason for the current cabinet to continue "if an attempt is made to block the peace process, and if the economic recovery is stopped." A Likud communique cited by IDF radio accused Peres of harming Israel through his "irresponsible" declarations. In a more conciliatory vein, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir stressed that the existence of the national unity government is vital to the economy, Jerusalem radio noted.

Iran-Iraq War

An Iraqi chemical attack in the Karbala'-5 sector was neutralized thanks to the "complete chemical defense preparedness" of Iranian forces, Tehran radio reported. The Iranians had captured a "key position" west of Fish Lake earlier on 24 February, killing or wounding over 900 Iraqis, according to IRNA.

For Iraq's part, a communique broadcast by Voice of the Masses radio stated that Iranian attempts to attack the Iraqi III Corps were thwarted by artillery fire and Iraqi air strikes. In the Gulf, Iraqi naval units dealt a "destructive" blow to Iran's Nowruz oil field 23 February, the communique added.

DRA

Diplomacy — Foreign Minister Abdol Wakil announced at a Geneva press conference that the DRA will make "fresh proposals" regarding a timetable for the Soviet troop withdrawal, AFP reported. On the subject of national reconciliation, Wakil declared that the establishment of a coalition government could occur "at any time" and does not depend on the outcome of the indirect talks with Pakistan.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry is finalizing its proposal for quadripartite talks among the Afghan mujahidin, the USSR, Pakistan and Iran, according to a Ministry spokesman cited by IRNA. The official stressed Iran's concern that the indirect talks in Geneva have ignored the key issues of an unconditional Soviet withdrawal and participation of the mujahidin.

Pakistani Protest — The Pakistani Foreign Ministry lodged a "strong protest" over the 20 February intrusion of eight Afghan warplanes which bombed the Arandu area of Chitral District, injuring three people, Karachi radio reported.

Libyan Involvement in Chad

Chadian troops downed a Libyan MIG-25 warplane near Zouar in the Tibesti region 24 February, Chadian Embassy sources in Paris told AFP, adding that the Libyans resumed bombing Chadian positions in Fada 23 February. A communique carried by Ndjamena radio announced that 28 Libyans were killed in clashes around Zouar the same day.

FBIS **DAILY REPORT**

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Soviet Troop Withdrawal Timetable To Be Proposed

AU241942 Paris AFP in English 1922 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Geneva, Feb 24 (AFP) — Afghanistan will make fresh proposals on a timetable for Soviet troop withdrawal when indirect talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan resume here Wednesday, Afghan Foreign Minister Abdol Wakil said Tuesday.

"We reached an agreement on this matter with the Soviet authorities," Mr. Wakil told a press conference here.

The issue of the timetabling of Soviet troop withdrawal has been the major stumbling block at the indirect Afghan-Pakistan talks here, which began in 1982 under the auspices of U.N. representative Diego Cordovez.

Mr. Wakil repeated the hope he expressed in Moscow last Friday that the current round of negotiations would be the last.

"My country needs peace," he said, adding that talks were in progress between the Soviet-backed Kabul government and more than 400 groups of Moslem rebels.

These talks were going ahead in the framework of the "national reconciliation" policy launched by Kabul last month.

He said that 25,000 Afghan refugees had returned since then and that 15,000 rebels had handed over their weapons but he claimed that "Pasdarans (revolutionary guards) of Iran and militia in Pakistan are shooting on Afghan refugees who want to return to Afghanistan."

The Afghan minister said that Kabul's new policy could lead to a "coalition government with all political groups including figures from the previous regime."

The setting up of such a government could come "at any time and does not depend on results from Geneva," he said.

Mujahidin Attacks on Soviet-Kabul Troops Noted

BK211344 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1300 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] In Afghanistan, the mujahidin are reported to have launched several attacks on Soviet-Kabul troops at different places during the first week of this months. According to reports, they damaged 23 warplanes and a helicopter besides inflicting heavy casualties on the Soviet-Kabul troops. A number of armored vehicles were also destroyed during these attacks.

Twenty Soviet Planes Downed Over 3 Weeks

BK241402 Hong Kong AFP in English 1303 GMT 24 Feb 87

[By Samy Zuberiv]

[Text] Islamabad, Feb 24 (AFP) — Moslem rebels in Afghanistan have downed a total of 20 Soviet-supplied aircraft in the past three weeks as fighting has escalated following the rebels' non-observance of the government's unilateral ceasefire, Western diplomats said here on Tuesday.

Continued bombing attacks on the ruling party and the government officials created problems in Kabul last week, while pressure from outside the city began to mount with fighting to the north, west and south of the capital clearly audible and occasionally visible to diplomats in the city, they said.

Mujahedeen rebels were now moving towards Kabul, and according to a well-placed diplomatic source an unusual late winter offensive against the Soviet-backed forces in the city could be in the offing.

The source said he suspected the unseasonal rebel activity may be timed to coincide with the peace talks which are due to resume in Geneva on Wednesday.

Fighting continued elsewhere, notably in the provinces of Ghazni, Kandahar, Paktia, Parwan, Herat and Ningarher, the sources said.

They added that Mujahedeen had shot down two Soviet-made aircraft in fighting which left fifty Afghan soldiers dead and wounded besides destroying two armoured vehicles and two trucks in the Bala Murghab region of Herat, which borders Iran in the north-west of the country.

At least 20 Mujahedeen were also been killed in the prolonged clashes, they said.

The diplomats said that building work on a European-funded hospital in Herat City had been stopped "due to the difficult security situation" there.

They added that as the regime's much-publicised national reconciliation proposals had apparently failed, the authorities had resumed "press gang" operations to force people into the army forces in the eastern city of Jalalabad — in spite of official pledges that such operations would cease after the January 15 ceasefire offer.

Afghan Army Chief General Shahnawaz Tani has admitted 520 ceasefire violations, resulting in over 200 deaths and more than 400 injuries, up to February 15. He has said that 30 homes were destroyed by rebels during the period.

The diplomats also said that bomb security measures remained in force in Kabul, where authorities defused four time bombs recovered from a parked truck on February 15 from a truck parked near a cinema.

Two parcham (communist) party officials were kidnapped and an Afghan Army captain was assasinated on the same day, they said.

The diplomats reported "heavy activity" at the Soviet hospital in Kabul.

Quoting "a very reliable source," the diplomats said that on the

night of February 14, guerrillas ambushed a Soviet fuel convoy at Hossein Kot on the strategic Salang Highway leading north from Kabul, killing or wounding eight Soviets.

They also said that 12 Afghan police officers along with some 100 soldiers had joined Mujahedeen who also siezed about 100 weapons in an operation in Laghman Province last week.

Mujahedeen also shot down two Soviet-piloted helicopters in the Charikar region of Parwan Province, with one of the aircraft crashing into a civilian house and killing three people, the diplomats said.

Western diplomats said Mujahedeen had moved in Parwan Province "much earlier" than in previous years, and were planning a co-ordinated attack on pro-government forces in the near future.

They also reported that Afghan personnel, working under Soviet supervision, had completed laying under-ground telephone and electric power lines for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ruling party headquarters and some other official buildings.

"The plan is aimed at assuring the integrity of communication in the even that war comes to Kabul" the diplomats said, quoting Afghan Government sources.

The report appeared to explain the visit of a top Soviet technical official — Communications Minister Vasily Shamsin — on Monday.

Politburo Assesses Keshtmand Visit to USSR
LD212051 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] The PDPA Central Committee Politburo has considered the report of Comrade Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand, member of the PDPA Central Committee Politburo and chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers, concerning his official working visit to the Soviet Union. It pointed out that during the visit, from 18-20 February, useful talks were held between Comrade Nikolay Ivanovich Ryzhkov, chairman of the USSR Council of ministers and Comrade Soltan Ali Keshtmand, chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers.

During the talks, comradely goodwill and a unanimity of views regarding all the issues discussed were expressed.

Both sides placed a high value to the level of Afghan-Soviet cooperation. It was pointed out that the national reconciliation program, reflecting the new political thought, specifies a new approach in all Afghan-Soviet relations. The foundation for these relations was laid in Moscow in December during the talks between Comrade M.S. Gorbachev and Comrade Najib, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee.

The decisions made in the recent talks are devoted to strengthening relations between the DRA and Soviet Union on the basis of the new specific measures. These talks pointed out that the national authorities in Afghanistan, within the framework of the national reconciliation, are engaged in solving the various socioeconomic issues, the results of the undeclared war, and are strengthening a progressive movement in the field of education and training, public health, and culture.

The manifestation of the characteristics of the above-mentioned issues raises new duties for Afghan and Soviet colleagues. Bilateral trade, including border trade, will be further stabilized. The volume of trade transactions between Soviet enterprises and Afghan investors, will be increased. Mixed Afghan-Soviet commercial and industrial enterprises will be actively created with the participation of the private sector. This task pays attention to the creation of new working conditions which bear special importance for the increasing number of returnees.

Through the measures taken for the economic life of our compatriots and the joint efforts of our people, the ground will be prepared [to assist] our compatriots who have suffered losses as a result of the counterrevolutionaries' deeds.

During the talks it was also pointed out that the policy of reconciliation will also broaden the conditions for the political solution of the events around Afghanistan.

A guarantee for the cessaion of external interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs and its non-repetition will be a key to solving this issue. In the event the above results are attained, the ground will also be prepared for the speedy return of the limited units of the Soviet Union. As M.S. Gorbachev stated in his speech, delivered to participants of Moscow's international forum under the slogan: For a nuclear-free world, for the survival of mankind. The understanding of the U.S. side and Afghanistan's neighbors and international efforts are necessary to settle this issue.

Both sides expressed readiness for constructive cooperation aimed at discussing and implementing the solution for the situation around Afghanistan, in which the interests of people in Iran and Pakistan should be considered, too.

It was pointed out that the next stage of the seventh round of Afghan-Pakistani talks will start in few days in Geneva. If there are honest efforts by both sides, this round could be the final round. The Afghan side will make such effort. It was pointed out that Pakistan has also expressed interest in the political settlement of these issues. It is hoped that these assertions will be transformed into practical steps.

The Soviet side emphasized once again that its interest in and its friendly feeling toward the people of Afghanistan is unchangeable. The Soviet people fully support the efforts of Afghanistan's people for chosing the path of progress and development, and for creating peaceful life in a free, independent, and nonaligned Afghanistan.

Talks between Comrade Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand, chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers, and Chairmen of the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR, Tajik SSR, and Turkmen SSR, Comrades Kadirov, Knayeyev, and Khozhamoradov, were held on 2 February on issues related to the establishment of cooperative relations between the Soviet Central Asia Republics and the

DRA's northern provinces.

Both side were informed about preliminary work by each others' establishments in this connection. It was agreed that in the near future specific steps should be taken which aim to resolve issues connected with the establishment of border trade and social cooperation relations.

During the talks, the Soviet side wished further successes for the PDPA and the DRA Government toward the realization of the national reconciliation policy. In return, the Afghan side wished great successes for the Communist party, government, and people of the Soviet Union in fulfilling the historical decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress, the January CPSU Central Committee Plenum and an excellent celebration for the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The visit took place in a friendly and warm climate. Comrade Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand and his delegation were given a glorious and sincere welcome, which reflects the friendly feeling of Soviet people toward the people of Afghanistan. The proceedings of the visit were broadly covered by the Soviet press, radio, and television.

The PDPA Central Committee Politburo comprehensively approves the activities of the Afghan delegation headed by Comrade Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand, member of the PDPA Central Committee Politburo and chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers, during the official working visit to the Soviet Union. It expressed heartfelt appreciation to the CPSU Central Committee Politburo, Supreme Soviet Presidium, and the Soviet Government for the all-round internationalist assistance of the Soviet Union to the people of Afghanistan. The PDPA Central Committee Politburo commissioned the DRA Council of Ministers to design and prepare specific measures implement the achieved agreements.

Reportage on Visit of Soviet Deputy Minister

Meets With Gol Dad

LD201334 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 19 Feb 87

[Text] Gol Dad, deputy chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers, this morning met a Soviet delegation headed by P.A. Poladzade, USSR first deputy minister of land reclamation and water resources, which is in Kabul at the invitation of the DRA Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources. The BIA correspondent reports that at this meeting talks were held on the comprehensive assistance of the Soviet Union in the broadening of irrigation projects, construction of government farms and the Kokcha Dam, repair and extension of Sardeh dam's irrigation system in Ghazni, deep well digging, and Soviet assistance to the Aliabad farm of Konduz and Khowaja-Alwan farm in Baghlan. The meeting was also attended by Ahmad Shah Sorkhabi, DRA minister of irrigation and water resources; his deputy ministers; and the deputy head of the State Planning Committee.

Received by Keshtmand

LD212221 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] At the DRA Council of Ministers headquarters this morning Comrade Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand, member of the PDPA Central Committee Politburo and chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers, received Polad Adzhiyevich Polad-Zade, first deputy minister of land reclamation and water resources of the USSR. The delegation has come to Kabul at the invitation of the DRA Ministry of Irrigation and Wate. Resources.

During the meeting, talks were held on joint measures for Afghan-Soviet cooperation in the fields of irrigation for the years 1366-69 [begins 21 March 1987] as well as the participation of both sides in creating joint construction establishments, maintainance of the irrigation systems, and attracting private national investors. According to a BIA correspondent, Ahmad Shah Sorkhabi, minister of irrigation and water resources; (Mouakhomud Khamidoyech), deputy minister of land reclamation and water resources of the Uzbek SSR; and [name indistinct] deputy to the economic counsellor of the Soviet Embassy in the DRA were present during the meeting.

Cooperation Agreement Signed

LD230604 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text] A cooperation agreement on irrigation for 1986-1989 between the DRA and the USSR was signed this afternoon in Kabul. The protocol was signed by Mohammad Aziz, vice chairman of the Council of Ministers and chairman of the State Planning Committee, and P.A. Poladzade, USSR first deputy minister of land reclamation and water resources, at the State Planning Committee headquarters.

Under the terms of the protocol, the Soviet Union will assist in the construction of a dam on the Kokcha River and in building a general canal, as well as in the excavation of deep wells, the preparation of economic and technical reports on state farms and affairs related to the reconstruction. The protocol also provides for aid in repairing the Sardeh Dam and the provision of tools and material toward strengthening DRA establishments and the dispatch of experts.

The Soviet Union will also assist in northern areas in the revival of the irrigation system, the construction of pump-stations over the Konduz River and in the irrigation of cotton, beet, grain and the irrigation of new lands of other state farms in various areas of the country.

Concern Conveyed at Sri Lankan Military Moves

BK241406 Delhi General Overseas Service in English
1330 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] India has expressed its grave concern at the military operations of the Sri Lankan Government in northern and eastern provinces and economic and communication blockade on Jaffna. It has conveyed to Sri Lanka that India cannot resume its good offices in the search for a political solution unless these measures are ended. The Rajya Sabha was informed today that 11 delegations have visited Sri Lanka over the last 4 years to help in sorting out the ethnic crisis. The house was also informed about the government's concern on the presence of personnel from Britain, Israel and other countries who are helping Sri Lankan forces. This will only complicate further the search for the solution.

PRC Claim on Arunachal Pradesh 'Rejected'

BK241558 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] The Rajya Sabha was informed today that India is in touch with the Chinese Government through diplomatic channels to sort out the issue of Chinese intrusion into the Sumodorong Chu Valley in Arunachal Pradesh. The Chinese personnel continue to remain in that area since the middle of last year. The minister of state for external affairs, Mr Natwar Singh, said in reply to a question that the government has categorically rejected a Chinese claim on the area.

Gandhi Speaks at Arunachal Pradesh Inauguration

BK250152 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Excerpts] Mizoram has become the 23d and Arunachal Pradesh the 24th state of the Indian Union. The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, was present at the inaugural functions of both the states. [passage omitted]

Speaking at the inaugural function of Arunachal Pradesh in Itanagar this afternoon, the prime minister assured all possible help to the new state for marching toward progress and prosperity. Our Itanagar correspondent Mr B.N. (Guhain), reports that a large number of people thronged the Indira Gandhi Park to attend the inaugural function. A cultural program with traditional tribal songs and dances marked the occasion. Speaking at the function, the governor Mr Bhishma Narain Singh and the chief minister, Mr Gegong Apang, said conferment of statehood on Arunachal Pradesh has fulfilled the long-cherished aspirations of the people. The prime minister has since returned to New Delhi.

Prebudget Economic Survey Results 'Encouraging'

BK241011 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] The prebudget economic survey for 1986-87 presented to parliament today observes that the overall indicators of economic performance are encouraging. Aggregate economic growth in the first 2 years of the seventh 5-year plan is proceeding according to plan targets. The rate of industrial growth has increased. The food situation remains comfortable despite three successive weak monsoons. Inflation is under control, the trade deficit in the current year has been reduced significantly. The survey notes that these are substantial achievements made possible by a sound and responsive macroeconomic economic policy environment.

The economic survey was presented to the Lok Sabha by the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi. The minister of state for finance, Mr Janardan Poojari, presented it in the Rajya Sabha.

According to the survey, growth in gross national product is likely to range between 4.5 to 5 percent in the current year. This would mean that the real economic growth has averaged about 5 percent a year in the last 7 years as compared to the previous long-term trend growth rate of 3.5 percent. For the first time in the first 3 years of the plan, 63 percent of the 5-year central plan target is likely to be fulfilled in real terms. The survey observes that the economy has clearly moved on to a higher growth path.

The survey notes that 1986 monsoon was below average for the 3d consecutive year. However, the food grain production in the current year is likely to exceed the level of 150.5 million tons achieved in the previous year.

The survey indicates that industrial growth accelerated to over 8.5 percent in 1984-85 and 1985-86 from an average rate of 5.4 percent in the preceding 3 years. Growth in the central year is also expected to be good.

Electricity generation from April to December last year registered a 10 percent increase as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. Revenue earning railway freight also showed an increase of nearly 7 percent in the first 9 months of the current financial year. The growth in coal production is also substantial; it registered an increase of 8.7 percent in the first 9 months, the highest in the last 5 years.

Economic Report 'Misleadingly Optimistic'

BK250726 Hong Kong AFP in English
0650 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] New Delhi, Feb 25 (AFP) — Economists and opposition leaders hit out Wednesday at the Indian Government's Annual Report on the State of the Economy which they said was misleadingly optimistic.

The economic survey laid before Parliament Tuesday forecast a five per cent growth in gross national product (GNP) during the fiscal year ending March which it said indicated that the economy had moved to a "higher growth path."

But economic analysts and opposition leaders charged the report with painting a picture that differed from facts and "exaggerating the good news just a little" by juggling figures.

They said it had ignored several areas of concern, including growing budgetary deficits, increasing government expenditure

and public debt, and the public sector's inability to generate the surpluses expected of it.

The Times of India, a respected conservative daily which freqently criticises Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's liberalisation of the economy, headlined a front page story "An Optimist's Economic Survey," while *The Economic Times* termed it "painting a picture."

The Patriot, a communist daily newspaper, said: "New Growth Path for Economy — Indeed."

The survey based its optimism on acceleration in industrial growth, adequate food stocks, reduction in the record trade deficit and control of consumer prices.

"These substantial acheivements have been made possible by a sound and responsive macro-economic policy environment," it said.

If the Finance Ministry is to be believed, "each one of the policies initiated two years ago is working like a dream," *The Indian Express* said in an editorial.

"There is a great deal that ought to be causing more concern than is apparent from the survey," it added.

Jaswant Singh of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata (Indian People's) Party charged the government with having reduced the survey to a "public-relations exercise."

"The state of the economy report should be a dispassionate account, which this is not," he told *Agence France-Presse* . "Several important issues have been side-stepped or pushed to the background, like the budgetary defict and government spending."

Analysts pointed out that the GNP had been maintaining an average growth rate of a little more than 4.5 per cent right since 1974-75. the growth forecast for the current fiscal year does not warrant the conclusion that the economy had entered a new growth phase, they said.

Jay Dubashi, a distinguished economy commentator, told AFP: "The report is grossly misleading. Something has been holding up economic growth, it does not say what or why. It should have spelled out the problems in greater detail."

The report said the budgetary deficit — earlier estimated at about three billion dollars — is now put at a more realistic 5.6 billion with non-plan expenditure increasing.

The trade deficit had fallen by some 800 million dollars from a peak of 6.8 billion dollars in the last fiscal year, attributed by the survey to the government's "corrective measures" which include several incentives to boost exports.

But analysts said the trade gap had narrowed considerably due to the fall in international oil prices and exports had increased because of a fall in the world value of the rupee.

The report said inflation was under control. Measured in terms of the wholesale price index, inflation during 1986-87 is expected to be 6.7 per cent, but in terms of the consumer price index it is 7.8 per cent. Some analysts said that such figures did not mean inflation was fully under control.

The balance of payments remains under pressure from repayment obligations to international [words indistinct] trade.

Foreign exchange reserves had fallen 128 million dollars by the end of January, against increases of 1.01 billion dollars in 1984-85 and 461 million dollars in 1985-86.

"If the government wants to take credit for the positive developments, and to be sure there have been those too, it deserves criticism equally for the negative trends," Mr. Jaswant Singh said.

"By ignoring the problems and saying everything is fine it cannot wish away the problem," he added.

Soviet Culture Minister Meets With Gandhi

BK241659 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1600 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Excerpt] The Soviet minister of culture, Mr V.G. Zakharov, is in New Delhi to discuss among other things matters relating to the holding of an India festival in the Soviet Union and a festival of Soviet culture in India. He called on the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, this evening. A common bond of friendship permeating through the centuries between India and Soviet Union was mentioned by both the leaders during the discussion.

The festival of India is a show window exercise to project the dynamic changes, which have not affected the traditional bonds (? still) remaining close to the hearts of the people.

A set of documents regarding detailed program of the events at the festivals of India and the Soviet Union to be held in each other's country were signed in New Delhi today. The human resource development minister, Mr P.V. Narshimha Rao, and the Soviet minister of culture, Mr V.G. Zakharov, signed the agreement. [passage omitted]

Protest Lodged With DRA Over Airspace Violation

BK250231 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu
0200 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Eight Afghan military aircraft intruded up to 20 km into Pakistani airspace on Friday [20 February] and dropped four bombs on Arandu area of Chitral District, slightly injuring three persons.

The Afghan charge d'affaires was summoned to the Foreign Office in Islamabad, and a strong protest was lodged with him over this unprovoked attack.

Troop Withdrawal Meeting To Be Held 26 Feb

BK201624 Karachi Domestic Service in English
1600 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text] The prime minister, Mr Mohammad Khan Junejo, has felicitated his Indian counterpart, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, on the completion of pull out of troops of the two countries in the Ravi-Chenab sector as envisaged in agreement arrived at between them in New Delhi on the 4th of this month. In a message to the Indian prime minister, the prime minister, Mr Mohammad Khan Junejo, described it as an auspicious beginning for the realization of the common aim of defusing tension along the border. He also reaffirmed the Pakistan government's determination to extend all cooperation in reaching agreement on further measures to pull out its troops in other sectors. He was confident that the return of the troops to the peace-time location would contribute to the restoration of normalcy.

Radio Pakistan's representative, points out that it had been agreed that the officials of Pakistan and India would meet again from Thursday next [26 February] for discussion on pull out of troops to the peace-time locations in the remaining sectors.

Peshawar Protest Directed Against Afghan Refugees

BK211047 Hong Kong AFP in English
1031 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] Islamabad, Feb 21 (AFP) — Shops were closed in the bordering Pakistani city of Peshawar on Saturday as groups of students protesting against Thursday's killing of school children in a bomb blast took to the streets demanding the expulsion of Afghan refugees, reports reaching here said.

The death toll in the truck-bomb blast in a primary school in Garhi Qamardin about five km (three miles) from Peshawar had risen to 14 while 70 others, mostly children, were still in hospital. The condition of several children was said to be serious.

The government has said it will pay compensation to the families of the victims, blaming the incident on "unscrupulous" Afghan agents and foreign-inspired terrorists.

But the mood in the city was angry as protestors demonstrated for the third day running against the presence of Afghan refugees. People clashed with refugees for the first time in eight years on Friday on the road leading to the scene of the blast. Two refugees were injured in an exchange of fire, press reports said.

Shopkeepers kept the shutters down on Saturday as students chanting slogans set fire to a jeep at Peshawar University, attacked the state-owned banks, stoned police and Afghan vehicles, witnesses said. Police baton-charged the crowd and fired tear gas shells, injuring some of the demonstrators.

Students, who are demanding the resignation of the provincial government for its failure to provide security, planned to hold a rally later in the day. But police early on Saturday reportedly blocked entry points to the venue.

All Colleges Closed in Peshawar

BK211600 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu
1500 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] It has been officially announced in Peshawar that all universities and their affiliated colleges in Peshawar, including the Khyber Medical College and all educational institutions of Peshawar Division, will be closed beginning tomorrow and until further notice. Examinations will be conducted according to schedule.

PRC To Build 3 Powerplants in Hyderabad

BK201601 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu
1500 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text] China will set up three power plants with a total capacity of 630 mw in Jamshoro near Hyderabad. These power plants will be operated by oil. The work on this project will be commenced immediately. Two power plants of 210 mw each will be constructed in about 3 years and another unit with the same capacity will be completed a year after that. About $200 million will be spent on both these projects. China will provide a loan for two units. An agreement was signed on these power plants between the Pakistani delegation led by the federal secretary for water and electricity and the vice president of the Chinese machinery and tools Import and Export corporation in Beijing today.

SRI LANKA

AFP Reports Separatists Reject Ceasefire Offer

BK211559 Hong Kong AFP in English
1541 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] Colombo, Feb 21 (AFP) — The major tamil separatist group has rejected Sri Lankan President Junius Jayewardene's offer of a general amnesty and a ceasefire if it agrees to peace talks, well-informed sources said Saturday. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the strongest of the Tamil militant groups, has told Colombo that it will not lay down its arms or open negotiatios aimed at a peaceful settlement of the conflict, the sources said.

(In Madras, southern India, where the Tamil separatist groups have their headquarters, a newspaper reported Saturday that the LTTE had described the Sri Lankan president's proposals as tantamount to a demand for surrender.

("We wish to state categoricaly that the LTTE will never be forced to the negotiating table at the point of a gun," *The Hindu* newspaper quoted an LTTE statement as saying.

("Having subjected our people to untold sufferings by economic strangulation and unleashed the most brutal form of offensive, Sri Lanka is stipulating terms and conditions which amount to a demand for a surrender," it added.)

The government ended a massive military sweep in the north and east earlier this week which it claimed inflicted heavy casualties on the LTTE. The sources here said that LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, who has returned to northern Sri Lanka from India, has informed Colombo that any party wanting to talk to his group must come to Jaffna, the northern capital.

Mr. Prabhakaran has also conveyed to Colombo that any negotiations must be based on four principles spelt out by the Tamils at abortive peace talks held in Thimpu in mid-1985, the sources said. Mr. Jayewardene offered to grant an amnesty to Tamil separatists and release those in detention who have not been charged if the LTTE abandoned its armed struggle for a separate state on the north and east of the island.

He also offered to end the government's military operations against the Tamils and lift a fuel embargo imposed on the Jaffna Peninsula. Mr. Jayewardene made the proposals last week in his reply to a message from Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who said New Delhi will not be able to resume its mediatory role unless Colombo halted military operations against Tamils and lifted the embargo on Jaffna.

However the Sri Lankan government's position was made known to the LTTE earlier by third parties who were involved in trying to bring the LTTE into talks with the government, well-informed sources said, adding that these individual mediatory efforts had angered India. The views of Mr. Prabhakaran, the LTTE leader, were made known to Colombo by other senior LTTE leaders through the third parties, the sources said.

The principles the LTTE is insisting on are recognition of Tamils as a distinct nationality, recoginition of their right to self- determination, their right to a homeland and the granting of citizenship to all Tamils and the granting of fundamental rights to Tamils. At the Thimpu talks, the government rejected the first three principles and said any talks will be within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity and integrity.

Sixty Killed As Bomb Explodes 'Prematurely'

BK230833 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English
0634 GMT 23 Feb 87

["OANA/Pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Feb 23 (LANKA PUWATH) — A hole in a water bowser which caused a leak saved the Sri Lankan security forces camp at Navatkuli, Jaffna from destruction, Jaffna sources told LANKA PUWATH. The bomb which exploded when being planted in the water bowser by a group of terrorists watched by some villagers prematurely exploded when being fixed causing the death of 60 persons, including a number of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) gang of terrorists and destroying five concrete houses in the vicinity.

The dead included the LTTE explosives expert 'Captain Ideas Vasu', and 'Lt. Col. vs Urputhan' described as a leading fighter. But the large majority of those killed by the LTTE explosion were civilians.

Jaffna sources said the Beirut style truck bomb attack on the Army camp was being placed in such a position that when the water level in the bowser reached below a certain level it would trigger off a massive explosion. However, the bowser had sprung a leak after the explosives had been packed into it. 'Ideas Vasu' and his assistants were welding the hole that sprung a leak setting off the explosion which blew up 14 terrorists and 46 innocent civilians to smithereens, destroyed the five houses, and of course the water bowser.

The vehicle belonged to a contractor who supplied water to the security forces camp about 12 kilometres away from where the explosion occurred.

Jaffna sources told LANKA PUWATH that Velupillai Prabhakaran the LTTE leader had planned this truck bomb attack in a desperate effort to regain the prestige he has lost through a series of humiliating defeats at the hands of the security forces in northern and eastern Sri Lanka after his return to Jaffna from his sanctuary in Madras, as Tamil Nadu, too, was getting too hot for him.

'Public Apology' for Bombing

BK240623 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English
0604 GMT 24 Feb 87

[OANA/POOL Item]

[Text] Colombo, Feb 24 (LANKA PUWATH) — Reacting to a series of massive protests including a hartal [strike] against the

killing of 46 civilian Tamils including several children in a premature time bomb explosion at Navatkuli, Jaffna, northern Sri Lanka, earlier this month, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) gang of terrorist, Velupillai Prabhakaran has in an attempt to appease citizens of Jaffna, published a public apology for the killings in Tamil language newspapers published in Jaffna, Jaffna sources told LANKA PUWATH.

They said that the apology published in the newspapers in northern peninsula expressed Prabhakaran's deep regret over the explosion.

The explosion took place when a hole in a water bowser in which a time bomb had been planted to explode in a suicide Beirut style truck bombing at the Army camp at Navatkuli, was being welded by the LTTE explosives expert captain 'Ideas Vasu' who was himself blown up to smithereens along with 13 other terrorists and 46 civilians.

The bomb was designed to explode once the water in the bowser reached below a certain level.

A number of other civilians were also wounded and warded in the Jaffna hospital while five concrete houses in the vicinity were destroyed.

It was designed to destroy the Army camp at Navatkuli.

LTTE Suffers 'Mauling' by Rival Tamil Group

BK231633 Hong Kong AFP in English
1604 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Colombo, Feb 23 (AFP) — The main Tamil separatist group has taken a mauling at the hands of a rival militant group that has refused to accept its authority in eastern Sri Lanka, security sources said here Monday. At least six guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) group, including three of its leaders, have been killed and one wounded in the past week in clashes with the smaller Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the sources said. The tigers have been trying, with little success, to crush the EPRLF in the past six months.

Both groups have been waging a campaign for a separate Tamil homeland in the east and north of Sri Lanka, but in the past year the Tigers have clamped down on five separatist rival groups, including the EPRLF, in a bid to assert their authority as the sole representatives of the Tamil people. Security sources said that the two bitter rivals had clashed in the eastern province at Ulichchi, Mandur, Wellwai and close to Batticaloa town.

They said that almost 150 guerrillas from both group's had been killed in the internecine struggle since December, and added that the Tigers had come off worst due to their poor organisational structure in the east.

The media centre said that one LTTE leader was killed and another seriously wounded Thursday in a firefight with EPRLF fighters.

On Saturday the Tigers lost two of their top officers in an open clash with the EPRLF, sources said.

A source close to the militants, contacted by phone in Batticaloa Monday, told *Agence France-Presse* that the Batticaloa Senior Citizens' and Peace Committee were making mediatory efforts to end the "meaningless killings."

He added that three LTTE members had been killed in a clash Sunday with an EPRLF force at Irithiyapuram, near Batticaloa.

The media centre, meanwhile, said Monday that government security forces had arrested 28 Tamil militants and destroyed two separatist hideouts in the eastern district of Trincomalee Sunday. It added that militants Sunday had attacked an army camp at Navatkuli, in northern Sri Lanka, with mortar fire and bombs but no casualties were reported.

The Tamil weekly *Chintamani* said Sunday that the LTTE was preparing for a major attack against government troops in the north. The weekly, quoting reliable sources, said that arms had been shipped across the Palk Strait separating Sri Lanka and India, and taken to LTTE camps in the north.

In a massive sweep at the beginning of the month the Sri Lankan army overran Tamil bases, hideouts and training camps in the northern and eastern provinces, according to official sources.

More than 5,000 people have been killed in the ethnic violence since mid-1983.

Dissatisfaction With Zail Singh's Address Noted

BK241543 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English
1513 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Colombo, Feb 24 (LANKA PUWATH) — The Government of Sri Lanka has expressed dissatisfaction regarding the address made in the Indian Parliament by Indian President Zail Singh concerning the Sri Lankan ethnic problem the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation announced in its news bulletin tonight.

It said that the Indian high commissioner in Colombo J.N. Dixit was summoned to the Foreign Ministry today by the Foreign Minister Shahul Hameed.

Quadrilateral Talks on Afghan Issue Proposed

LD241836 Tehran IRNA in English 1830 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA — A spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry reiterated here Tuesday that the first and most important step to end the Afghan problem was for the Soviet troops to immediately and unconditionally pull out from the country.

The spokesman also stressed that the Islamic Republic believes that its participation in the Geneva talks which did not attach any importance to the role of the Muslim people of Afghanistan, was contradictory to Islamic and human principles.

The Foreign Ministry made the remarks in an interview with IRNA when asked to express the views of the Islamic Republic on the new round of indirect talks between representatives of Pakistan and the Kabul regime.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the spokesman said despite the great afflictions and tyrannies the Afghan nation has suffered at the hands of the imposed regime in Kabul and the occupier forces, the Afghan people have never abandoned their efforts to regain the independence of Afghanistan and establish a political system founded upon their ideology.

On the views of the Foreign Ministry about the recent developments regarding the Afghan issue, he said the Soviet troops presence in Afghanistan in the recent years, has encouraged the U.S. to increase her unjust intervention in the region. He added that a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan would strip the U.S. of any pretext and foil the justifications of this superpower in this regard.

On the future of Afghanistan, the spokesman said that Iran, as an Islamic state and a neighbor of Afghanistan, favors an independent and non-aligned Afghanistan. He also expressed hope that with an immediate Soviet troop pull-out from Afghanistan, the ground for a voluntary, honorable and triumphant return to the country of over five million Afghan refugees would be paved.

In light of the fact that the Geneva talks, after five years, has had no result for the Muslim Afghan nation, the Islamic Republic has recently proposed quadrilateral talks between the Afghan mujahideen as the real representatives of the Afghan people, the Soviet Union, Iran and Pakistan, the spokesman said.

He added that the final study of the details of this proposal is underway and the reason Iran has raised the idea is because so far, two important factors, i.e, the unconditional withdrawal of the Soviets and the participation of the mujahideen in efforts to solve the issue, have been ignored.

Reports, Communiques Detail Fighting With Iraq

Fath-4 Operations Begins

LD231024 Tehran IRNA in English 1013 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — The second phase of Fath-4 guerrilla operations was launched in a 300 sq. kms area, 70 kms deep inside northern Iraq Sunday night, said a statement issued by the Central Headquarters of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC), here Monday.

In these operations the headquarters of Iraq's Fifth Corps in Diyana area was destroyed, it added. Smoke of the burning base billowed skyward in theh area hours after the operations. Furthermore, the communication center of the Iraqi Fifth Corps was totally destroyed and heavy damage was inflicted on intellgence and information center of Diyana and its police station.

The operation was launched by the forces under the command of the Ramadhan Headquarters and Peshmergas of the Patriotic Union of Kordistan, simultaneous with an attack launched on Shalamcheh-Basra road, said the statement.

Iraqi Sukhoy Bomber Downed

LD231045 Tehran IRNA in English 1031 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — An Iraqi Sukhoy bomber was shot down by Iranian anti-aircraft fire in the Karbala'-5 operational region Monday. This brings the number of Iraqi planes downed since Karbala'-5 operations (Jan. 9) to 78. There is no report yet available on the fate of the pilot.

Iraqi Losses Detailed

LD231117 Tehran IRNA in English 1050 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — At least 1,500 Iraqi soldiers were killed or wounded, among them 150 officers and NCOs, in the second phase of the Fath-4 operations, launched by Iranian combatants in an area of 300 square kms, 70 kms deep inside northern Iraq Sunday night.

Announcing the above, the central headquarters of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) said that scores of Iraqi tanks, personnel carriers and vehicles were also destroyed in the operations code-named 'Ya Allah'.

The following enemy installations, military bases and garrisons were totally destroyed in the second phase of the Fath-4 operations:

1-The telecommunication center of Iraq's fifth corps.

2-A motor pool of the enemy fifth corps.

3-A logistical garrison in the city of Rawanduz, Irbil Province.

4-Some government buildings in the city of Qaza Seddiq [name as received].

5-Two garrisons in southern Diyana.

6-'Hammiya' garrison in the region of Diyana.

7-The intelligence center in the city of Rawanduz.

8-A police station and intelligence organization in the city of Diyana.

9-A battalion base in the region of Rawanduz.

10-Twenty three enemy military bases in Diyana plain and Rawanduz region.

11-A police station in Rawanduz.

12-Iraqi troop concentration site and military equipment in Diyana.

13-A power station in Rawanduz was destroyed, resulting in a city-wide blackout.

14-Iraqi missile pads and anti-aircraft guns in Diyana plain.

15-An Iraqi officers' Club in Rawanduz.

Meanwhile, the headquarters of Iraq's Fifth Corps in the region of Diyana was destroyed by heavy Iranian artillery fire. The region was engulfed in flames for hours after the enemy headquarters had been hit.

Chemical Weapons Attack
LD231233 Tehran IRNA in English 1220 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Khatam ol-Anbiya' HQ., Feb. 23, IRNA — At least 2,500 Iraqi soldiers have been killed or wounded in the latest Iranian [words indistinct] enemy (?positions on Shalamcheh)-Basra axis on the western bank of the Jasim River since Sunday night. Corpses of several Iraqi officers and NCO's are among the dead, reported Khatem ol-Anbiya' headquarters on Monday.

In its 26th communique, the headquarters said that at least 150 Iraqi soldiers were captured in the operations, including some company commanders and an officer who is a chemical weapons specialist.

The badly beaten Iraqi forces who sustained grave blows in the fresh Iranian assault launched a chemical attack on Iranian positions in the war theater but failed because of the timely reaction of Iranian anti-chemical units to neutralize impacts of the toxic gases.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi Sukhoi-22 fighter was shot down in the theater Monday morning, bringing to 78 the number of enemy warplanes downed since the start of the Karbala'-5 operations on January 9.

Iraqi brigades 39, 116 and 435 of the Second Infantry Division were totally destroyed and all their personnel killed, wounded or captured by Iranian Muslim combatants. Forty percent of Iraqi Brigade 423 was also destroyed.

A large amount of Iraqi military equipment and several vehicles were destroyed and many others seized intact by the Muslim forces of Iran in the surprise assault code-named 'Ya Zahra (S.A.)'.

Some units of a commando brigade of Iraq's 1st Corps, despatched to the region to reinforce the Eighth Mechanized Brigade, sustained considerable casualties and losses and were forced to fled the region because of the heroic resistance of Iranian combatants.

Iran's Muslim combatants are now fortifying their positions and their heavy fire has pinned down Iraqi troops in their positions, with heavily shelling [as received] enemy supply routes on the western bank of the Jasim Rover, the communique concluded.

Khatam ol-Anbiya' is the joint headquarters of Iran's army and the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC).

Communique on 22-23 Feb Action
LD231727 Tehran IRNA in English 1718 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — An Iraqi warplane which had violated the airspace of Karaj, Tehran Province, Sunday was shot down by Iranian anti-aircraft fire in the western province of Kurdestan at 13:55 GMT the same day. The plane's pilot was captured, said a military communique here.

Joint Staff Communique number 2756 said that Muslim forces of Iran reconnoitered and shelled Iraqi positions in the northwestern fronts Sunday and Monday inflicting substantial casualties and losses on enemy troops and setting ablaze vast parts of their positions.

Exchange of artillery fire continued in the western fronts Sunday regaing somewhat more heavily in Qasr-e Shirin as a result of whch heavy casualties and losses were inflicted on Iraqi troops.

Iraqi forces sustained several casualties and losses when an enemy truck column which was carrying enemy personnel was hit by Iranian artillery fire Sunday night.

Three convoys of Iraqi patrols attempting to infiltrate Iranian positions in Sumar were forced to flee while sustaining several casualties by artillery fire of Iranian Muslim combatants Sunday.

In the southern fronts, heavy artillery duels were reported in Kushk, Zeydi and Fakkeh where Iranian artillery fire heavily shelled several Iraqi logistical columns inflicting considerable losses on them.

Iranian Gendarmerie forces responded to Iraqi artillery fire in parts of the southern and western fronts Sunday killing or wounding a number of enemy soldiers and silencing enemy fire, the communique concluded.

Iraqis Bombed in Karbala'-5 Area
LD231731 Tehran IRNA in English 1721 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — Iranian jet fighters heavily bombed Iraqi troop concentration sites, munitions dumps, and armoured hardware in the Karbala'-5 operational theater Monday morning, inflicting heavy casualties and losses on enemy troops.

Announcing the above, a Joint Staff communique said here that the fighters returned safely to bases after the bombing mission which took place at 07:32 hours local time (04:02 GMT).

Iraqi Gunboats Damaged

LD231825 Tehran IRNA in English 1816 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan prov., Feb. 23, IRNA — Several Iraqi gunboats were damaged in the Khawr Abdallah waterways, north of Persian Gulf, when they attempted to break the siege of the Muslim combatants, early Monday morning.

Coastal unit of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) opened fire on the Iraqi gunboats inflicting heavy damage on them and forcing them to flee.

Claim of Basra Shelling Denied

LD240919 Tehran IRNA in English 0825 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA — A spokesman for the War Information Headquarters (WIH) categorically denied Iraqi claims alleging Iran of having shelled the Iraqi port city of Basra.

In a statement issued here Tuesday the WIH said that the Iraqi rulers in a bid to perpetuate additional crimes, claimed Monday that Basra was shelled by the Iranian forces Sunday and Monday morning.

On the contrary, it stressed, during the said period the Muslim forces of Iran have not yet fired a single shell at Basra and described the Iraqi claims as totally baseless.

However, in the said two days Iraq continued to shell Iranian cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr, added the statement.

Indications once again prove that the proposed Iraqi halt to attacks on Iranian civilian areas was nothing but a deception.

As the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly stated it is against attacking civilian areas and has never initiated such moves. On the contrary, the Iraqi regime is capable of any sort of crime.

The Islamic Republic of Iran once again reiterates that as long as Iraq refrains from striking at Iranian cities, it will not carry out such attacks. However, the Muslim forces of Iran will undoubtedly swiftly retaliate any Iraqi attack and the Baghdad regime will be held responsible for consequences of such moves, concluded the statement.

Firing Squads Shooting Iraqis

LD241006 Tehran IRNA in English 0845 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., Feb. 24, IRNA — Iraqi soldiers who tried to flee in the Iranian attack Sunday night west of Jasim River on Shalamceh-Basra road, were fired at by Ba'thist firing squads stationed in the area, said an Iraqi soldier.

Shakir Hasan 'Abbasi captured in Sunday's operation of the Muslim forces of Iran said in an interview with IRNA here Monday that Iraqi military personnel's morale was terribly low.

Therefore, 'Abbasi, member of Brigade 39 of Iraq's second division added that the Iraqi regime has posted firing squads to prevent Iraqi troops from deserting.

In the Sunday night operation, he added, a large number of Iraqi forces who wanted to flee the operational region were shot at by the firing squads.

On casualties inflicted on Iraqi forces in latest Iranian assault, he said a considerable number of personnel of brigades 39 and 417 were killed and a number of others surrendered.

Another Iraqi soldier, Yasin Taha Ibrahim from Basra, member of Brigade 39, also captured in Sunday night operations, said that at the start of Karbala'-5 operations, Jan. 9, Iraqi security forces tried to prevent Basra residents from evacuating the city.

However, after meeting mass opposition to the move, the city has now been requisitioned for military purposes and most of its inhabitants have fled to Nasiryah, Ghammas and al-Zubayr.

In Karbala'-5 operations a large number of Iraqi officers were killed. They were replaced by police officers, who due to their lack of familiarity with military tactics, resulted in units under their command being smashed quickly, he added.

An Iraqi officer, Hani Chouli, from Turkoman in Kirkuk province, said that Turkoman minorities in Iraq were living in bad conditions. The Iraqi regime has recently prohibited sale of homes to Turkomans in Kirkut province. By doing so, he added, it aims at expelling them from their homes.

2 Iraqi F-1's Downed Over Gulf

LD241024 Tehran IRNA in English 1020 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb 24, IRNA — Two Iraqi Mirage F-1's were downed Tuesday morning in a fierce dog fight over waters of the Persian Gulf. Efforts are underway to locate the pilots of the downed planes.

Area Near Fish Lake Captured

LD241346 Tehran IRNA in English 1335 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA — In continuation of the Karbala'-5 operations Iran's Muslim forces broke through six fortified Iraqi defense lines in Shalamcheh region early Tuesday, killing or wounding at least 900 enemy soldiers, according to the Khatem ol-Anbiya' headquarters.

The headquarters said that Muslim forces of Iran broke through many barriers set up by Iraqi forces on the western bank of the Jasim River, attacking Iraqi positions and capturing a key position west of the Fish Lake.

Fifty Iraqi POWS captured in the operations have been transferred to safe places behind the fronts. 12 enemy tanks and

armoured personnel carriers were also destroyed.

Some units of Iraqi Brigade 437 of the fifth mechanized division are under siege and have been dealt heavy blows by the Iranian Muslim combatants.

Iranian forces are now advancing towards their pre-determined goals, Khatem ol-Anbiya, the joint army-IRGC headquarters concluded.

Iraqis Launch Chemical Attack
LD241722 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] According to a report from the Khatam ol-Anbiya' headquarters, following the defeat suffered by the Iraqi Ba'thist Zionist Army in the "Karbala'-5" operational zone, the enemy launched a chemical attack, which was neutralized thanks to the complete chemical defense preparedness of Islam's combatants. Iraqi aircraft also several times mistakenly targeted their own forces' positions and thereby enemy units suffered casualties in this region. A report from the area says that a battalion commander was among those killed during today's operations. Also, the commander of a commando brigade of the Iraqi First Army Corps was wounded.

Communique on Air Defense
LD241740 Tehran IRNA in English 1720 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA — An Iraqi warplane was shot down in a fierce dogfight over the Persian Gulf at 07:07 GMT Tuesday, said a military communique released by the Joint Staff Command of Iran's Armed Forces here.

Joint Staff Communique Number 2757 added Tuesday that two more Iraqi warplanes were shot down by Iranian anti-aircraft fire in the Karbala'-5 operational theater at 06:46 and 12:57 GMT Monday.

Iranian jet fighters heavily bombed Iraqi troop concentration sites, armoured hardware and munitions dumps in the Karbala'-5 region Monday morning, inflicting substantial casualties and losses on enemy forces. The fighters returned safely to bases after the bombing mission which took place at 04:02 GMT.

A foreign cargo ship, impounded by Iranian naval gunboats on February 17, was released and escorted to international waters Monday night after all cargo on its board had been thoroughly inspected.

Iraqi forces sustained considerable casualties and losses in the northwestern fronts Monday as their positions were shelled by Iranian Muslim combatants.

Muslim forces of Iran opened heavy fire on Iraqi armoured and infantry units in Mehran, Helaleh and Nafte Shah, western fronts, Monday, inflicting heavy casualties and losses on enemy troops.

In the southern fronts Monday, Iranian forces disrupted Iraqi engineering operations in Nahre-Anbar area, destroying several pieces of enemy engineering machinery.

Iranian gendarmerie forces killed or wounded a number of Iraqi soldiers, and set afire an enemy munitions dump in parts of the southern and western fronts on Monday.

Reconnaissance flights of Iraqi helicopters were checked in Chazzabeh, southern fronts, forcing enemy copters to fleet by Iranian anti-aircraft fire during Monday, The communique concluded.

Iraq Shells Cities
LD241826 Tehran IRNA in English 1820 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., Feb. 24, IRNA — Iraqi Ba'thist regime shelled and bombed Iranian cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr (Khuzestan Province) over the past 48 hours, despite its pledge to cease such attacks on Iranian cities for two weeks. Some residential units were destroyed and damaged in the Iraqi attacks on the cities.

Iraqi Brigade 'Smashed'
LD251041 Tehran IRNA in English 1030 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — An Iraqi brigade besieged since Tuesday morning was totally smashed by the Muslim forces of Iran Tuesday night in Karbala'-5 operational theater, said a Khatem ol-Anbiya' headquarters statement here Wednesday. The commander of the brigade was killed and a number of [word indistinct] under his command were captured.

The Iranian forces made new advances west of the Fish Lake Tuesday night, killing a large number of Iraqi forces and wounding many. In Tuesday night's operation a number of Iraqi tanks and personnel carriers were also smashed.

'At Least 700' Iraqis Killed 25 Feb
LD251225 Tehran IRNA in English 1140 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — Muslim forces of Iran raided besieged Iraqi forces west of the fish canal in the Karbala'-5 operational theater early Wednesday, killing or wounding at least 700 enemy soldiers and capturing many others. Bodies of a brigade commander and some officers and NCOs are among the dead.

Announcing the above, Khatam- ol-Anbiya' headquarters said that a tank company under the command of Iraq's First Corps was totally routed and a large amount of enemy military hardware and ammunition was either destroyed or seized intact by Iranian [word indistinct] Ground Forces of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) destroyed another battalion of enemy Brigade 435 and a battalion of the First Commando Brigade of Iraq's Corps in the operations. The IRGC forces were backed by heavy artillery fire.

A unit of Iraqi troops are now under the siege of Iranian Muslim forces in the theater.

Meanwhile, Iranian jet fighters heavily bombed Iraqi troop concentration sites and armoured units in the theater many times Wednesday, inflicting substantial casualties and losses on enemy forces, Khatem ol-Anbiya', the joint Army-IRGC headquarters concluded.

U.S. Human Rights Report 'Baseless, False'

LD241859 Tehran IRNA in English 1853 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA — Recent report of the U.S. State Department on the issue of human rights in Iran stems from an unprecedented crisis facing the Reagan administration as a result of the disclosure by Iranian officials of Washington's aborted attempt to improve relations with Tehran.

Announcing this, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tuesday that the U.S. on one hand is trying to distract the world public opinion from its bitter defeat in connection with the Islamic Republic and on the other it has mobilized all its resources to cover up Iraqi war crimes against Iran.

The spokesman said that the U.S. State Department claims to be supporting human rights by releasing such reports which he described as "baseless and false" while world mass media, affiliated to imperialism and Zionism, including American ones keep silent on criminal Iraqi air raids on Iranian civilian areas, including schools and hospitals.

Simultaneous with such anti-Islamic Republic reports, the world is now a witness to the U.S.' full support for the apartheid Pretoria regime, i.e. its illegitimate veto right which is used for hindering any economic sanctions on the racist South African regime, he said.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman said the Islamic Republic has in no way any respect for Washington's so-called humanitarian claims but holds the U.S. responsible for many crimes being committed worldwide. He said Iran considers the U.S. as the biggest violator of human rights.

Velayati Returns From India, Comments on Visit

NC210648 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] The Central News Unit reports that Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, who had visited New Delhi at the head of a political-economic delegation to attend the fourth session of the joint Iranian-Indian economic committee, returned to Tehran last night and was welcomed by the deputy foreign minister and the Indian ambassador to Tehran.

After his arrival, Mr Velayati said in an interview with our correspondent; During this trip two rounds of talks were held with the Indian foreign minister, and at the end of the session of the joint economic committee a cooperation protocol was signed without any major problems. He added: Among the important topics discussed by the committee were the agreement proposed by the two countries on India's supplying iron ore needed by the Iranian steel industry and regulation of our oil and commercial relations through agreement on a common formula. Also, in the cultural and consular fields new agreements were reached on the exchange of professors and students. During these meetings discussions were also held and views exchanged on cooperation between the two countries' radio and television services. In conclusion, our foreign minister said: During this visit we also met with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and India's ministers of commerce, culture, and industry; and our country's minister of heavy industries is to visit India in the near future for additional discussions.

Foreign Minister Velayati, Rafiqdust Visit Syria

For coverage of the visit to Syria by Foreign Minister Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Mohsen Rafiqudust, minister of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, see the Syria section of the 24 February Middle East & Africa *Daily Report* and subsequent issues.